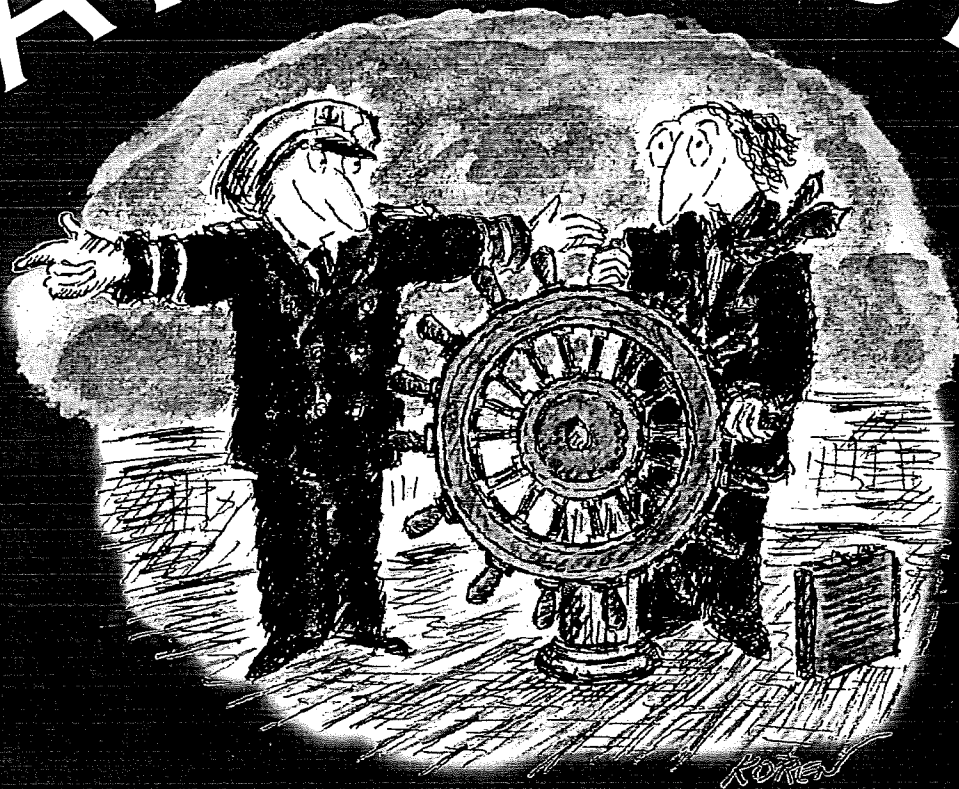


THE BESTSELLING GUIDE—UPDATED & REVISED

"A brilliant, passionately written book. If you are serious about your career, this is the one to read." —JACK CANFIELD, *CO-AUTHOR OF THE SUCCESS MANIFESTO* **PSYCHOPHYSICIAN** **CHICAGO**

— THE —
PATHFINDER



How to Choose or Change
Your Career for a Lifetime of
Satisfaction and Success

— **NICHOLAS LORE** —

One way to make life really exciting is to forget it is a game. It is like going to the movies and seeing a film that is so compelling that your identity as a separate observer disappears. You become so entranced by the action on-screen that nothing else exists. You become so completely plugged in to experiencing all the adventures, joys, and tragedies that you forget it is a film. Playing our various life games, the same thing happens. We become so entranced with playing the game that we do not notice it is a game. We forget that whatever we are playing is not the only possible game.

The particular games you play reflect your own individual life strategies and aims. They vary from person to person because we have different personalities, backgrounds, experiences, and levels of inner development.

This chapter consists of two inquiries that were designed to look into the games we play. The first inquiry, “What Am I Playing For?,” provides an opportunity to identify the games you play and notice which of them you play most often. In the second inquiry, “What Games Will I Play?,” you get to tinker with them, noticing how well they are working for you and whether they are worth continuing to play. Then you can choose, change, modify, or abandon the rules.

INQUIRY 18

What Am I Playing For?

Most of us go through life unaware that we are in the midst of endlessly playing games for stakes we never consciously chose. Please spend a few minutes and take inventory of your game collection. Some games may remind you of roles you selected in the previous chapter. There is some overlap between these two distinctions. What is most useful is finding clues about your behavior, whether you consider them to be roles or games.

1. Go through the following list of games. Mark all the games you play or have ever played during the course of your life. Don't forget the games you play only occasionally. You may notice that you play most of them at one time or another. Even the most conscious, self-aware, positive person may occasionally play a few hands of *Zombie*. The instructions continue after the games list.

Zombie: Lives a completely mechanical existence; just goes through the motions of living.

Sufferer: Lives in darkness. Can always find something to suffer about every day. Small hint: The Buddha said that this is the primary game everyone plays. Whenever we think anything (including ourselves, others, the world) should be other than it is, we suffer.

Criminal: Sees others as a “mark” or as an asset to manipulate. This includes the professional criminals and many supposedly upstanding, more socially acceptable people who use others for their own ends and hardly notice the suffering they cause. Throughout history, there have been plenty of industrial magnates, lawyers, politicians, and many others who belong in this category.

Tribal Primate: Lives exactly the same way that people did one hundred thousand years ago. Gets up in the morning, fulfills a gender role, raises kids, chats with other tribe members, goes to bed. This is the human variation on the basic ancient game of life: eat, procreate, seek shelter from the storm, and survive.

Leaf in the Wind: Goes whichever way life leads. Reacts automatically to whatever circumstances arise.

Comfort Junkie: Does anything to remain at equilibrium and avoid uncomfortable emotions and thoughts. This game is often at the core of addictive behaviors, couch potatodom, and risk avoidance. “Always return to equilibrium ASAP” is one of the most basic strategies of nature. No wonder it is one of the most favored games of the human race. You play this one often. So does everyone else.

Hog in the Trough: Get more, have more, buy a bigger one.

Power and Domination: Played in innumerable ways. Can involve controlling territory, people, or information. A game played by people from every walk of life: from the child having a tantrum to the macho man, from cops to serial killers.

Security: Protection from loss and from negative changes in circumstance is the key. The goal of the game is to store lots of nuts against the possibility of famine and to keep the wolf away from the door.

Driven: Participants in this game run endlessly on whatever treadmill they are on—never finished, never complete, never at peace.

In Control or Not Out of Control: Must always control their environment, inside and out. One of the most prevalent games. Avoids loss of control at all costs.

The Social Animal: The game is about relationships and interplay with other people. The players of this game invest more energy in social interaction than others do.

Looking Good, or "I'm Cool": Get their sense of self from peering in the mirror of what they perceive others think of them. "I am what I think I see reflected in the eyes of other people."

Compliance and Rebellion: Two sides of the same coin. They do what others want, or exactly the opposite.

Always Seeking Love: The game is to fill a perceived deficit of love, affection, acceptance.

I'm the Boss: Runs the show, may be the commander in chief of an empire or just one small goldfish.

Know-it-all: Knows everything about everything.

Kid at Play: Carpe diem, perennial kid.

Hedonism: If it feels good, do it. If it doesn't feel good, don't do it.

Adventurer: Plays daring games, seeks new experiences, unknown territory. This can be played in the external world or within one's own internal world.

Dreamer: Perfectly happy floating in his internal cosmos without needing to bring his dreams down to earth.

Householder: Raise a family.

Knowledge: Learning, education, acquisition of information, understanding, and/or know-how.

Dedicated to Truth: The philosopher, seeker of the grail of understanding.

Wise One: A fountain of wisdom, learning, knowledge, intelligence.

Art and/or Beauty: Devoted to appearance, fashion, design, lovely things, art appreciation.

Problem Solver: Everything is a problem to be solved.

The Performer: Always onstage.

The Artist: The self-expressed person who communicates through works of art. The art may be a traditional art or the art of ideas.

Celebrity: The goal is fame and the special treatment that comes with celebrity.

Religion: The goal is salvation or an equivalent.

Personal Growth: Attention is turned inward toward self-discovery and improvement. Their psyches and souls are the works of art they are sculpting. Perhaps this one could be listed under the games of the Contribution category below, but working on one's own self does not necessarily make a contribution to anyone else.

Awakening: Players discover that they are rarely present, mainly functioning on autopilot, and take on the game of waking up.

Creativity: This game has nothing to do with the field in which it is played. It can be expressed in sports or business as well as in the arts. At its essence are visionary magic and the inspired genesis of creating something new.

Excellence: The game of producing extraordinary results at whatever you are doing and whoever you are being.

Contribution: Make the world a better place, give a gift of well-being to others.

Service (Agent of the Universe): The rules of this game ask that a person take on a new identity as a commitment to serve instead of identifying oneself primarily as a psychological being concerned mainly with one's own strategies and desires. People who play this game still have all the concerns, considerations, and emotions as everyone else. What is different is that they have chosen to give less command-and-control value to their personal strategies.

2. Go through the games again, putting a different identifying mark next to those you play often, the ones that are a regular part of your daily life.

3. Go through the list a third time and see if you can identify one or two main games. Which game or games run the show? This should not be too difficult to identify, because our main game or games are the central strategies, the organizing principles of our lives. If more than one or two are vying for the championship, you may be able to sort this out by asking, "Which of these do I play all the time, in most situations?" Identify which ones actually run the show, not which ones you would like to play. If you are not excited about the one that you discover has been running the show, you can always make up a new main game. But, for the time being, just do your best to get to the truth.
4. One of the central principles of the concept of "game" is that in a game, the rule book defines one destination as more desirable than the others. Every game has an objective. In Monopoly it is to be the only player who has not gone bankrupt. If there is no destination, there is no game. How do you win the games you play? What is the main objective of your biggest and most dominant games? What do you get from playing that game? At this very moment, you are asking yourself one of the most powerful questions a human being can ask himself or herself: *What am I playing for?* You are revealing the core of what runs your life. It is not something deep and mysterious. It may be so obvious that you haven't noticed it before. It may be the perfect game for you, or it may not be. It may or may not be as noble and idealistic as you would wish. But who said you had to be noble and idealistic, anyway? You may discover that you want to keep it or change it. Don't worry about that right now. Just keep asking, "What am I playing for? What is the objective? What is the strategy?" The answer may appear right away, or it may take a few days of inquiry. After all, "What am I playing for?" and "What is the meaning of (my) life?" are the same question. Since philosophers have been working on this one for thousands of years, it wouldn't hurt to spend some time on this.
5. Look back over this inquiry for clues. Add whatever you find to your Clues list. Ask, "Is there anything I am willing to choose as a definite component?" Add anything you choose to your Definite Career Design Components. Do any new careers or jobs come to mind? If so, add them to your Career Ideas.
 - Remember to keep working with your clues, moving them toward selecting new definite components.

INQUIRY 19

What Games Will I Play?

Now you know that you are a player of multiple games. You've identified them and understand the rules and the objectives. The moment of choice has arrived.

1. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Are my main games worth playing?
 - How well is it working for me to play the games I do?
 - Do I want to keep playing them?
 - Do I want to promote or demote any of them?
 - Will I take on any new games that are more worthy of playing?
2. If your most dominant games are not the ones you want to play most, why not? What is missing?
3. What games would you like to wake up to in the morning and play wholeheartedly, every day?
4. What sort of work would best serve to help you to win the main games you intend to play? Give some time to this question.
5. What are some of the qualities, functions, activities, and rewards that a job might offer that would help you win the games you intend to play?
6. What might interfere with winning the games you most want to play?
7. Would you be willing at this time to take on a new game, to reorder the priorities of the ones you play, to make up some new rules? If so, turn to your Definite Components document and add whatever you have decided.